

# KENDALL GAZETTE

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OCTOBER 4 - 10, 2005

## LIFT opens new home in Town and Country

BY RICHARD YAGER

**K**endall's largest senior center has moved its activities into new quarters at the Town and Country Center, but its length of the stay may depend upon finding funding from other sources to subsidize monthly rental of the space.

For many years the Senior LIFT Center occupied 6,000 square feet on the second floor of an enclosed mall area rent-free, but moved in mid-August to new quarters at 8236 Mills Dr. because of pending redevelopment plans for the Town and Country retail site on the east side of Mills Drive.

The roadway bisects more than 600,000 square feet of shopping center and freestanding commercial buildings between two

entrances at SW 117th Avenue and SW 88th Street (N. Kendall Drive).

Sale and transfer of six land parcels comprising the Codina Group's development to TIAA-CREF, a New York-based financial servicing company, ended the Florida firm's ownership that provided LIFT with activity space for a token yearly rental, occupied soon after Town and Country opened. Codina Real Estate Management Inc. continues to manage the holding for the new owners.

"We're here now but for how long depends upon how finances can be worked out for longer term leasing," said Marge Laboranti, president of the non-profit organization which moved into a 4,750-square-foot storefront, formerly a Hallmark card shop located just east of the center's Publix supermarket.

"Actually, the first floor space works very well for us, rather than a second-story location," she added. "However, our present lease is guaranteed only for one year so we're continuing to try to obtain year-to-year funding assistance through the county."



Wednesday Bridge group gets direction from Joni Mitchell, instructor, in new LIFT storefront location near Publix in Town and Country Center.



Marge Laboranti

## Team Metro collects food for Gulf Coast 'neighbors'



Kendall's Team Metro director Catherine Minnis (left) and Community Council 12's Robert Wilcosky pack up cartons of contributed non-perishable foods destined for New Orleans during Neighborhood Family Night on Wednesday, Sept. 28. To make your contribution, contact the Team Metro Neighborhood Service Center at Kendall Marketplace, 11609 N. Kendall Dr., phone 305-270-4979, or dial 311 for information countywide on how you can help.

(Photo by Richard Yager)

Laboranti said that Miami-Dade Commission chair Joe Martinez, "has been most helpful in trying to see what could be done" on an annual basis to help Kendall seniors continue activity programming without raising membership dues or seeking community contributions for its 600-plus members.

LIFT (which stands for "Living, Involvement, Fulfillment, Togetherness") closed daily operations for about two weeks to move its library, tables, chairs, administrative offices and equipment into the new location.

"We've been able to maintain our activities since opening and, as a matter of fact, attracted additional new seniors to increase

our membership," Laboranti noted.

A kitchen facility is located adjoining the main meeting room to continue serving a daily lunch and cater special events.

For just over two years, LIFT members, officers and administrators have been concerned about losing their space and, at one point a year ago, secured a lease in another property. They canceled a lease agreement that eventually cost the organization \$35,000 to remain rent-free at Town and Country.

Since that time, efforts by East Kendall's Community Council 12, as well as Martinez's office, have sought to incorporate a portion of the yearly budget expense for LIFT from county sources.

## Miami-Dade Transit to conduct Hispanic Heritage tour series

BY HERNANDO VERGARA

Miami-Dade Transit will conduct a series of educational and cultural tours for Miami-Dade County residents interested in learning more about the history of Hispanics and their contributions to South Florida.

*Herencia Hispana* (Hispanic Heritage) tours will be offered in English and in Spanish, at no charge to the public, aboard air-conditioned Metrobuses every Saturday in October (Hispanic Heritage Month). Specially trained Miami-Dade Transit employees will narrate the tours.

*Herencia Hispana* will cover topics

ranging from the early history of Spaniards in South Florida to present day migratory trends and will include visits to the Freedom Tower, La Ermita de la Caridad and a tour of Calle Ocho.

The tours depart from the Stephen P. Clark Center located at 111 NW First St. in downtown Miami and will last approximately three to three and one half hours. Departures are at 9, 9:30 and 10 a.m. Reservations are required. For more information and to reserve your seat, call 305-884-7567, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and specify if you would like your tour narrated in English or in Spanish.